DATA GEMS: Learn the First Steps to Creating your Own Tabulation using Microdata
Transcript

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Hi, I am Alexandra Barker. Whenever you cannot find an estimate with our pre-tabulated data products, working with microdata can be a great alternative because you can create your own tabulations from individual records. I asked my colleague Rex to show us how to access microdata, select variables and geographies and put it all together in a table; you'll be amazed.

Hi, I'm Rex. If you've ever found that a data estimate you need isn't published or you need more detailed estimates than the pre-tabulated tables provide, you may want to consider using Microdata Access. This allows you to pick and choose your own variables and create custom estimates. In this data gem, I'll walk you through an example of using Microdata Access.

Let's say I need to know the number of individuals ages 18-45 in Oregon with a disability. As you can see, table B18101 in data.census.gov uses age groupings of 18-34 years and 35-64 years that won't allow me to determine this number. This is the perfect example of when to use Microdata Access.

Microdata Access can be found at data.census.gov/mdat. Currently public use data from the American Community Survey and the Current Population Survey can be found here. For this example, we'll choose the ACS 1-Year Estimates. The years of data that are available differ depending on the dataset you choose. The ACS 1-year Estimates are currently available going back to 2004. We'll keep the vintage as 2018 for this example. Click Next.

This screen is where you'll select your variables. For this example, we want to look at both the age and disability status variables. The age variable, AGEP, happens to be the quickest to locate because it appears first, so I'm going to check the box next to it. Notice that, when I check it, it gives me a message letting me know that I'll need to create a recode in order to place this variable in a certain way in my table. We'll come back to this in a minute.

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For now, to find the disability status variable, I'm going to enter the word "disability" into the label box. This brings up three variables. It looks like the second one, DIS, may be the one that I want, so I'll confirm this by checking the details. This recode includes "have a disability" or "does not have a disability", so yes, this is the one that I want so I'm going to check the box next to it. You can see that I have the two variables in my data cart.

Now I'm going to navigate to the Select Geographies tab. I want Oregon, so I'm going to select State and Oregon. I can see the chip showing that it was added at the bottom of the screen.

Now I'm going to move to the Data Cart tab. This is where I'll have to create the age recode in order to get data for the 18-45 year olds. I'm going to hit the Create Custom Group button and change the group label to "Age 18-45." Then I'm going to check the box next to 1 to 99 years and change the values to 18 and 45, and hit the Save Group button. Now we have two age groupings—one for the age 18-45 year olds that I need, and another called "Not Elsewhere Classified" that includes the remainder of the population. I'm going to change the name of these groups by clicking on the Edit Group button. Then I'm going to change the group label to "Under Age 18" and check the box for "Between 1 and 17" and "Under 1 year."

Then I'll hit Save Group. When it returns to the list of age recodes, I still have one "Not Elsewhere Classified" group, so I'm going to click Edit Group, change the group label to "Over Age 45," check the box next to "Between 46 and 99," and hit Save Group. Now I have all three groups clearly labeled.

Next I'm going to go to the Table Layout tab. Right now, I don't have my age recode included in the table, so I'm going to click on AGEP_RC1 and drag it to the Rows, right under Selected Geographies. As you can see, the table updates automatically to reflect where I've moved the variables. You can move the variables around to see alternate layouts of the table. The only thing I need to do is change the values in the table cells from Average of Age to Count. I think this looks good, so I'm going to hit the View Table button in the lower corner.

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Now we have the data populated in the table. There are 140,456 people ages 18-45 with a disability in Oregon. Notice that the weighting has automatically been applied to the variables. You also have the option on this screen to rearrange your variables in the table, change the vintage, or change the dataset.

If I select the Download/Share button at the top, I can download the table. To do this, I'm going to check the box next to Download table view and hit the Download button. This creates a CSV file that I can open in Excel.

I hope this is helpful! Thank you.

Thank you, Rex. This was very useful, and for all of you give it a try. Check out microdata, create your own tabulation, and if you need more videos like this visit Census.gov/Academy and subscribe. Thank you.